(b) whether 34 MPs had requested in a memorandum to the prime Minister of the previous Government not to go ahead with the amendments to Schedule M, *vis-a-vis* of the threat of closure of thousands of small scale pharmaceutical units;

(c) if so, the action taken by the Government so far; and

(d) if not, whether Government would form a committee to examine the need based requirement before implementing the revised Schedule M?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Representations including the memorandum submitted by MPs were received regarding the difficulties faced by the small scale pharmaceutical units in regard to the implementation of revised Schedule M.

(c) and (d) The drug manufacturers licensed prior to 11.12.2001 were given an exemption up to 31.12.2004 for complying with the provisions of Schedule M. The difficulties expressed by these existing manufacturers, especially of small-scale sector in regard to different provisions of the Schedule M were examined and a draft gazette notification GSR 738 (E) dated 08.11.2004 has been published so as to further rationalize the Schedule M.

Shortage of urea

†875. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
DR. MURLIMANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is likelihood of acute shortage in the availability of urea in the country for the forthcoming crop;

(b) if so, Government's response in this regard; and

(c) the total estimate of urea demanded for the Rabi crop on the basis of Government's estimate and the quantity of urea produced in the country?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) No, Sir.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The requirement of urea for Rabi 2004-05 crop season has been assessed at 108.35 lakh MT. The total availability for Rabi crops is estimated to be 118 lakh MT including about 11 lakh MT opening stock, 103.5 lakh MT of production and 3.5 lakh MT of imports.

Alternative and unharmful pesticides

†876. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any progress has been made in the manufacturing of alternative and unharmful pesticides in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Registration Committee (RC), constituted under Section 5 of the Insecticides Act, 1968 has registered several bio-pesticides so that dependence on chemical pesticides is substantially reduced. Besides, low dose and quickly degradable chemical pesticides, like sulfonyl urea compounds, have also been registered. Further, the Registration Committee is encouraging registration of safer formulations of already registered pesticides.

Spurious fertilizers manufacturing units in Punjab

877. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a few units manufacturing spurious fertilizers have been operating in Punjab for the last several years from where spurious and damaged fertilizers were being sent to various parts of the country;

(b) whether some persons have been arrested in this case and if so, the details thereof; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.